

BACK TO THE NATIVITY

By Andrew M. Frodahl

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AUDITION -- for 3m

In this scene, Hadley is able to convince Cliff that something strange is happening.

HADLEY: You don't believe me?

CLIFF: Do you hear yourself? A nativity costume turned into a sheep. Might want to check the date on that eggnog, bro.

HADLEY: You think I made this whole thing up?

CLIFF: That a sheep costume transformed into a sheep? Yeah, a bit too much.

(HADLEY goes to the washer and starts pawing through the nativity costumes.)

HADLEY: Okay, okay. Time for you to see the truth. I have not lost it, Cliff. *(Beat.)* Here we go, a shepherd costume. You wait and see. *(Holds up the shepherd costume.)*

CLIFF: Hadley, I don't have time for this. I need to get back.

HADLEY: So, let's recap. We took the sheep costumes, just like this shepherd costume, we placed them into the dryer. *(Puts the costume into the dryer.)*

CLIFF: Yes, I remember; it was only an hour ago.

HADLEY: I turned the knob to A.D.

CLIFF: *(Looks at the dial.)* Yup, "All Dry." Weird, this dial says B.C. What does that mean? I mean, I don't know dryers, but that seems odd.

HADLEY: That's easy, "Bright Clothes."

CLIFF: "Bright Clothes"? Really?

HADLEY: Yes, you know some clothes are really bright and that setting is meant for them. Anyway, we then turned the setting to one because we didn't want to shrink the costumes.

CLIFF: Are you sure these numbers are hours?

HADLEY: Now, before you left we switched the dryer to on.

(*HADLEY starts the dryer. SFX: The dryer rumbles on.*)

CLIFF: Hadley, I don't feel like sitting here another hour just so you can prove a point.

HADLEY: Fair enough. Maybe if I switch it to turbo express it will speed the process up.

(*SFX: The dryer rumbles and spins faster. Dryer buzzer. CLIFF covers his ears.*)

HADLEY: (*Cont'd.*) Then I opened the door and the costume became... (*Looks inside the dryer.*) I don't understand. When I did it before sheep came stampeding out. Hello? Is there a shepherd in here? It doesn't make sense. I did everything the same way we did before.

CLIFF: (*Rolls eyes.*) Bro, enough. I think you are coming up with bizarre stories to cope with your grief.

(*CLIFF takes HADLEY aside and closes the dryer door.*)

HADLEY: No, but, it did. It became alive, real.

CLIFF: (*Patronizing.*) How about I go get you a nice candy cane latte from the cafe down the street. Huh? You like those. You can drop me off back at the party, come back and finish these costumes and we can forget this crazy incident ever happened. Okay?

HADLEY: (*Coming to terms.*) Maybe some caffeine would be good.

CLIFF: Yes, that is probably it. Caffeine withdrawals.

(*CLIFF takes HADLEY'S elbow and they begin to move to the door. SFX: Loud knock on the dryer door.*)

AMIR: (OS.) Help! Help! I am trapped in this box!

(*CLIFF and HADLEY stop in their tracks.*)

HADLEY: What was that? Did you hear that?

CLIFF: Could be the ice maker. Keep going.

(*CLIFF pushes HADLEY towards the door. SFX: Another knock.*)

AMIR: (OS.) Hello? Is someone in there? Please help me.

(*CLIFF and HADLEY stop again. Hadley breaks free of Cliff's grip and runs to the dryer. He opens it. AMIR THE SHEEP SHEARER pokes his head out.*)

AMIR: (*Cont'd.*) I see the light. (*Notices HADLEY.*) Hello!

(*CLIFF passes out.*)

HADLEY: I rest my case. (*Notices Cliff.*) Cliff!

(*HADLEY runs to CLIFF. AMIR climbs out of the dryer comically. He cautiously stands against it.*)

AMIR: You have not seen any...sheep in here, have you?

(HADLEY fans CLIFF awake and helps him up.)

CLIFF: (Confused.) Where? What? How did you get here?

AMIR: Through the door in the cave, of course. We must whisper. (Loud whisper.) They can hear very well.

HADLEY: Who does?

AMIR: (Whispering.) The sheep. Shh!

CLIFF: But... (CLIFF opens the dryer and looks inside.) Where is the shepherd costume?

(HADLEY points to the shepherd wearing it. AMIR quickly shuts the door to the dryer and stands in front of it, fearful.)

AMIR: There are many of them in there. I ran and ran trying to escape their bleating rampage. I think they mean me harm!

HADLEY: The sheep?

AMIR: (Very serious.) Yes. (Beat.) That is some mean mutton out there.

HADLEY: But aren't you a shepherd?

AMIR: A sheep shearer to be precise. I'm actually terrified of them.

CLIFF: I... I... I am losing it.

HADLEY: Well, there are sheep in here somewhere.

AMIR: (Scared.) There are? Oooh! We must hide!

HADLEY: How can you be a shepherd and be afraid of sheep?

AMIR: My father was a sheep shearer, my grandfather was a sheep shearer, and his father was a sheep shearer. I had no choice.

HADLEY: But sheep are so innocent.

AMIR: Oh, they have pulled their wool over your eyes, my friend. Far, far from innocent.

SHEEP #1 and SHEEP #2: (OS.) Bah! Bah!

AMIR: Ahh! Did you hear that? Quick! We must be still like statues. A sheep can sense the slightest movement.

(Shaking, *AMIR* slowly moves towards *HADLEY* and hides behind him.)

CLIFF: Can I ask how you got in the dryer?

AMIR: You mean that tumbler?

CLIFF: This is some kind of joke, right?

AMIR: Joke? What's a joke?

CLIFF: My brother here put you up to this?

HADLEY: Cliff!

AMIR: To escape the sheep, I ran into a cave. There I found this weird-looking box. I got into the box and everything started spinning, and it got very hot! Then I heard voices. It was you.

CLIFF: All right, all right, I will play along. Do you have a name?

AMIR: Yes, it is Amir.

HADLEY: Nice to meet you, Amir.

AMIR: I need to get back to my room at the inn. It has a lock. And I don't think the sheep have a key.

CLIFF: Oh, are you staying at an inn in town for the holidays?

AMIR: I came to town for the census. I was born here. My father got me a job in a local pasture to pay for my trip. Are you here for the census?

HADLEY: Census?

AMIR: I have never seen a house like this one — not back in Capernaum, nor in Bethlehem.

HADLEY: Bethlehem? Like *O Little Town of Bethlehem*?

CLIFF: Where Jesus was born?

AMIR: I am not knowing this Jesus you speak of, but perhaps you have heard of Ruth's Tavern? It's the inn where I am staying. Maybe you can point me in the right direction.

SHEEP #1 AND SHEEP #2: (OS.) Bah! Bah! Bah!

AMIR: Ahh! Forget it. Run! The woolly bullies are here!
(Runs off.)

(*SHEEP #1 runs past CLIFF and HADLEY, then follows AMIR out the door.*)

CLIFF: Hey! There is a sheep!

HADLEY: Yup, and there goes the sheep.

(*HADLEY sits down on the couch. CLIFF joins him.*)

CLIFF: (Sighing.) I have to be dreaming.

HADLEY: I will wake you up then. (Pinches CLIFF hard on the cheek.)

CLIFF: Ouch!

(*CLIFF hits HADLEY, knocking him off the couch.*)

HADLEY: (Standing and returning to the couch.) Did you wake up? Nope. We are not dreaming. We are still here in the parsonage of paranoia.

CLIFF: What are we going to do about the costumes?
Dinah said they need those tomorrow morning.

HADLEY: I dunno.

CLIFF: I wonder if any of the other costumes would come to life. Like if we put in the donkey costume or the camel? I have never seen a real-life camel before, Hadley.

HADLEY: We are not putting anything else into that dryer!

CLIFF: Or we could put in a Wise Man costume and he could tell us what to do. I mean, he is a wise man after all. He might know what is going on.

HADLEY: Do you hear yourself? There has to be a logical explanation for this. Tomorrow we will find out there was a toxic gas leak in town and we all suffered from hallucinations.

CLIFF: Hey, what about putting an angel costume in, huh?

HADLEY: Definitely not! Every time an angel showed up in the Bible, men stumbled from fear and their bowels were loosed. No thanks.

(*Suddenly the front door swings wide open and a blinding bright LIGHT floods the stage.*)

HADLEY and CLIFF: AHHH!

(*HADLEY and CLIFF hug each other with their eyes shielded from the light. JESSE THE ANGEL is standing at the door.*)

JESSE THE ANGEL: Fear not! I bring tidings. Do not be afraid.

HADLEY: Too late. (*Beat.*) Did you come from the dryer?

CLIFF: (*Shakes his head no.*) Hadley, I need to change my pants.

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